The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor concerning in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1708 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 1944 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 34, NO. 1

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

On New Year's Eve, secret word was telephoned to a select group of newspaper executives, columnists and radio commentators to appear at a certain office at a certain hour for an important news conference.

At this conference, an individual who refused to let himself be identified except as a "high official source" made some blistering statements about the railroad and steel industry wage disputes.

Needless to say, we were not invited to this conference. Nor was anyone else who had the remotest connection with, or sympathetic interest in, the affairs of organized labor.

In fact, the first we or any other labor representative knew of the secret affair was when our eyes were assailed by hysterical anti-labor blasts in the morning papers on New Year's Day.

Labor was charged flatly in these stories with delaying victory in the war, with costing hundreds of thousands of American lives, with having committed the "damnedest crime against America."

These charges were not made in open court. Labor was given no notice. It was afforded no opportunity to reply. The charges were made in secret, in the best Hitler tradition.

Anonymity Disappears

Shock and surprise are mild terms to describe labor's immediate reaction to these stories in the press and to the flood of inflammatory statements that followed over the air.

But these emotions were aggravated ten-fold when within twenty-four hours newspapers not invited to the secret conference exposed the fact that the statements were made by Gen. George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army.

Labor's relations with Gen. Marshall had always been of the finest. He was consistently appreciative of the contributions made by American workers to the success of the war effort. He had never intimated directly or indirectly before that he was in the slightest degree disturbed by the labor situation. On the contrary, the War Department had repeatedly assured the leaders of the American Federation of Labor that it was highly satisfied with production results.

Naturally, we hastened to investigate the facts. We were informed that the "high official source" had never made the statements attributed to him in some newspapers, notably the Washington Post. He did not say that labor had delayed the war effort or that it had cost hundreds of thousands of American lives. What he did say, apparently, was that if Hitler were successful in propagandizing internal strife in America, it might result in stiffening resistance against the United Nations among the satellite countries and therefore might delay the war and cost lives.

Even with these amendments, the statement was open to question. Mere assertion is not equivalent to proof. Apparently others felt the same way we did. Investigations were instituted by the newspaper PM and by William Shirer, radio analyst who has come to be regarded as an expert on Nazi propaganda methods.

The Facts Exposed

PM was told by the Office of War Information that the Nazis had NOT attempted to exploit the rail and steel wage disputes in their propaganda broadcasts. The Nazis, in fact, had scarcely even mentioned the subject. Apparently Hitler realized he could not sell even his duped subjects on the idea that the home front in America was weakening when they were daily feeling the heavy blows delivered by American planes, made in record-breaking quantities by American workers.

Mr. Shirer discovered that of 2,372 Nazi broadcasts between Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 only 36 referred to the wage disputes and of these only four emanated from Hitler's propaganda machine in Berlin.

However—and this is a highly significant point—Mr. Shirer reported that the Nazi propagandists were quick to pounce on the statements attributed to Gen. Marshall and tried to squeeze psychological benefit out of these statements in their broadcasts.

Here is a direct and factual challenge to the "high official source" which must be answered.

In fairness to the millions of patriotic American workers that "high official source" should publicly identify himself without delay.

In fairness to the millions of American troops serving faithfully overseas, the facts should be made known.

In fairness to the American people, the truth should be brought out into the open at once.

Labor fearlessly welcomes the truth. It is proud of its war record. It condemns any anonymous attempt to besmirch that record.

AN EDITORIAL

Brotherhood Week In Wartime

Brotherhood Week will be celebrated during the week of Washington's Birthday.

Brotherhood is not a luxury but a necessity. Especially in wartime. It is not the deliberate assumption, on the ground of duty or of expediency, of an attitude of kindliness toward those not of our own circle, whom naturally we might distrust or loathe. It is rather the recognition of the true relationship of man to his fellowman, obedience to the law of man's being. The brotherhood of man is a corollary and consequence of the Fatherhood of God. All men are brothers one of another because all are children of God. For men of different races, nations or religions to treat one another as brothers is to live in accord with the nature of man as God has created him. To live otherwise is contrary to nature and carries with it the penalties that are attached to such dereliction. To deny brotherhood is to deny God.

The essence of brotherhood is a willingness to give to other men every right and dignity we want to keep for ourselves. This elevates it from the level of sentiment into that of purpose and action. Brotherhood, so conceived, is essential to the fulfillment of our democratic ideals in America.

It is essential, also, if we are to have a just and lasting peace. To perpetuate unnatural attitudes of intolerance, animosity, contempt and hatred is to keep men divided and hostile. Peace cannot be built on it. The dearth of brotherhood brought on this war. Only the practice of brotherhood between nations and within nations can make wars cease.

This is the teaching of religion, and statesmen are coming to see it and to teach it, too. The triumph of armed might, a consequent limit of national boundaries, even the organization of an association of nations will not, singly or together, guarantee a durable peace. But brotherhood will do it. Nothing else will do it. How much more havoc must man work before he learns it?

Teamsters Union Purchases Home For Mothers Of Invalided Sailors

Seattle.—This city's biggest and best Christmas present was given by the Joint Council of Teamsters, headed by Dave Beck, to the mothers of American sailors invalided at local naval hospitals. It consisted of a large home where the mothers of these boys may stay while visiting their wounded sons.

The gift, a former society house purchased by the union group for the use of the Navy Mothers Club at the nominal fee of $1 a year, will sleep thirty people and has spacious downstairs quarters where the mothers can entertain their boys.

It has kitchen and dining room where those mothers may fix their boys a home cooked meal, where coffee and a snack will always be available.

It isn't fancy or ornate but it is homey and when the Seattle Navy Mothers' Club gets through with it it will be even more so.

Cliff Harrisling, editor of the Seattle Star, suggested the idea to Mr. Beck and in a page-one editorial acclaimed the teamsters' gift "Seattle's biggest and best Christmas present."

AFL SHIPYARD SETS GREAT SAFETY RECORD

Wilmington, Cal.—When the California Shipbuilding Corp. (AFL) graveyard shift reported for work at midnight Dec. 7, it was the 453d consecutive shift without a fatality. Five hundred men would have to work eight hours a day without a fatal accident for 39 years to equal that safety record.

The 40,000 shipbuilders at the Terminal Island yard, which has built 200 ships on its ways, have worked 31,560,000 man-hours without a fatal accident. Lost-time injuries decreased from 844 in January 1943, to 138 in October 1943. The injury frequency rate (the number of lost-time injuries per million man-hours) decreased from 45.3 in January to 19.4 and the days lost from the month's injuries fell from 7,263 in January to 1,276 in October. The "severity rate" correspondingly fell from 3.62 in January and 4.55 in February to 0.21 in October.

American Workers Have Shortened War's Duration, Green Proclaims In Blast At Anti-Labor Smears

Text Of President Green's Statement

Text of AFL President William Green's statement on the anti-labor blasts that ushered in the New Year follows:

I address a message of sanity to the American people.

The United Nations are winning this war. They are winning it primarily because America has won the battle of war production.

The War Department assures me that the production picture was never better than it is now. The workers of our country have met and exceeded every production goal set for them in 1943. War materials are proceeding to every fighting front in surplus quantities and with record speed.

Let me assure the American people that, so far as the members of the American Federation of Labor are concerned, there shall be no interruption of the march to victory in 1944. They have adhered faithfully to the no-strike pledge. They will continue to do so for the duration.

In view of these facts, the statements attributed to an anonymous but "high official source" that recent wage disputes may delay victory come as a surprise and a shock to labor.

It is now reported in the press that such statements were actually made at a secret press conference by Gen. George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the United States Army.

Because of Gen. Marshall's consistently fine record, we are loath to believe he is responsible for the irrational, uninformed and inflammatory charges published in the press.

We challenge Gen. Marshall, or anyone else, to prove that the record of America's soldiers of production provides an effective propaganda weapon for the enemy. On the contrary, the fact is that American workers have silenced Hitler's propaganda guns and have shortened the war by turning out tremendous quantities of planes, ships, tanks, guns and ammunition in record time.

At Teheran Premier Stalin acknowledged this fact when he said that "without American machines the United Nations never could have won this war." These machines, it must be remembered, were made by American workers.

It is the height of stupidity to suggest that Nazi Germany and its satellite nations will be encouraged to continue the war by the existence of a few wage disputes in America. Our enemies know the war will be decided only by force of arms. American workers are producing those arms and will continue to do so until final victory is won.

Gen. Marshall's comments were reportedly provoked by the "threats" of a railroad and steel strike.

I hereby charge that the responsibility for the prolongation of these disputes rests entirely upon bungling, fumbling and incompetent handling by Government officials and agencies.

I hereby assert unequivocally that, although a strike date had been set, there never was the faintest possibility of an actual walkout on the nation's railroads. The railroad unions, most of which are affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, are responsible organizations led by responsible and patriotic officials. Their record is among the finest in the nation. They gave their solemn assurance to the President and to Congress that, come what might, there would be no railroad strike. Setting of a strike date was merely a device, wholly in accordance with law, to expedite determination of a dispute which had dragged 15 months and which had seriously upset the morale of the nation's railroad workers.

The wage dispute of the non-operating railroad workers could have been settled finally and amicably six months ago by labor and management in accord with the stabilization program had it not been for unwarranted and unnecessary interference on the part of the Economic Stabilization Director. The whole subsequent mess is the result of desperate efforts on the part of the Government to save his face after a fearful blunder.

It is not my province to comment on the steel wage dispute because it does not involve affiliates of the American Federation of Labor. But here again lack of a clear and cohesive policy on the part of the Government precipitated the trouble.

The Army has now, at least nominally, taken over the railroads. It has not, so far as we know, taken over the Government. As loyal citizens of America, the members of the American Federation of Labor call upon their Government, and particularly upon the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Navy to investigate the mysterious Marshall incident and to reprimand whoever was responsible for it.

WPB SALUTE TO LABOR HAILS PRODUCTION GAINS

Washington, D. C.—A new year's salute to American labor was issued by the War Production Board, hailing labor's history-making accomplishment in achieving "an outstanding record of war material production in 1943."

"The flood of planes, ships, guns, tanks and ammunition, which came from our factories last year could not have been produced without the devoted and increasing application of the skills and knowhow of our workers," the statement continued. "Day in and day out, with few exceptions, they have stayed on the job, working long hours, learning new skills, meeting production schedules—and in many instances exceeding them," the statement said.

Separate Welders Union Rejected

Washington, D. C.—The long-standing controversy over whether welders and burners can properly be regarded as a distinguishable craft, separate from the crafts of machinists, boilermakers, blacksmiths, sheet metal workers, or other trades which use the welding torch has been all but finally settled, as far as the National Labor Relations Board is concerned, in a recent case argued before that board by Joseph A. Padway, counsel for the American Federation of Labor, in conjunction with Mr. Charles J. Janigian and Sam Rosenwein, attorney for the Bay Cities Metal Trades Council.

The board denied a petition filed by the Independent United Welders, Burners and Helpers Union, asking for a separate unit of welders and burners employed in the shipyard. The board held that those doing welding and burning work at the shipyard, even though engaged exclusively in the work and supervised by separate foremen, were not a sufficiently delineated group to warrant their being set up as a separate craft, and such workers could not constitute a separate unit in view of the complete lack of previous bargaining history either in that shipyard or in any others in the area.

This is the closest to a direct determination of the question of whether the welding process constitutes a separate craft that has yet been made by the board.

In so far as the present decision denied a separate craft identity to the group of welders and burners, it followed and adopted the determination of this problem made by executive councils and conventions of the American Federation of Labor since the last World War. The AFL has held that welding is a process and that the welding torch is a tool, neither of which can any more come under the jurisdiction of any one trade than or calling than the hammer or the saw, and that in the use of any such new processes, jurisdiction over the work should follow as nearly as possible the craft which generally did the work by which the same purpose was accomplished prior to the introduction of such processes.

Lasting Jobs At Fair Wages Listed By Shishkin As First Postwar Goal

Washington, D. C.—Labor's foremost objective in reconversion to peace is to make sure that stable and durable jobs yielding stable and fair incomes are available in industry and trade to all men and women seeking work, Boris Shishkin, AFL economist, declared on the "America Tomorrow" radio program.

Stability of employment and security of income derived from productive work and opportunity for betterment are labor's "must" requirements to be achieved by free people through a system of competitive enterprise, he said.

"If a free system of productive enterprise geared to advance the welfare of all is to be attained, transition from a controlled war economy to a free peace economy must not be sudden. Those who preach abandonment of all wartime government controls immediately after the war create chaos. Their call is subversive to the very principle they profess. If a competitive enterprise in a free economy is to be assured when the war is won, transition must be gradual, coordinated and applied out in advance, with all elements combined in a concerted effort to maintain balance and with checks and balances firmly applied by the government under policies agreed upon by all groups," Mr. Shishkin continued.

"The key to reconversion must be charted now. The work of reconversion must be fully coordinated and effectively controlled. Only this will enable us to make during-the-war reconversion pave the way for postwar reconversion. Only this will assure a steady transition instead of a disastrous break. Only this will make sure that during-the-war reconversion will not detract one iota from the war effort at this decisive stage. We must neither encourage nor permit a stampede of essential war contractors away from their war responsibility for a place of dominant advantage at the postwar profit trough.

"Cut-backs and contract cancellations have already reached a stage making possible during-the-war reconversion to civilian work. Machinery must be set up at once for an orderly method of advance clearance and working coordination of all cut-backs and cancellations. Neither war contractors nor war workers must be permitted to be penalized for sticking to their war jobs by denying them access to postwar opportunities. Cancellation as well as reconversion must be spread evenly among communities and among plants.

"Immediate creation of a National Reconversion Commission with representatives of management, labor and agriculture, and headed by the Reconversion Administrator is imperative. Creation of such a top policy agency has long been overdue. In such an agency labor sees assurance of a concerted plan and a concerted effort of all groups for a balanced transition to civilian production in which returning soldiers and demobilized war workers find employment opportunities at fair pay."

Trade Unions Aid Manpower Shifts

Washington, D. C.—Representatives of trade unions will aid the War Manpower Commission in effecting speedy the transfer of construction workers from one area to another. The agreement, announced by WMC Chairman Paul V. McNutt, is designed to effect the fullest utilization of the experience and skill of workers released by the current decline in construction.

The arrangement is that when the authorized agent of a union in one area cannot supply the workers requested by an employer, he is to contact the nearest office of the United States Employment Service. If that office is unable to refer promptly the number of workers desired, the union agent is authorized to request agents in other areas to fill the order.

On receiving a request, the second agent may refer workers directly to the employer, but if he cannot, he is to contact the nearest office of the U. S. E. S. which, in fact, the nearest office of the United States Employment Service. If that office is unable to refer promptly the number of workers desired, the union agent is authorized to request agents in other areas to fill the order.

On receiving a request, the second agent may refer workers directly to the employer, but if he cannot, he is to contact the nearest office of the U. S. E. S. which, in fact, has long been overdue. In such an agency labor sees assurance of a concerted plan and a concerted effort of all groups for a balanced transition to civilian production in which returning soldiers and demobilized war workers find employment opportunities at fair pay."

Charge That Strike Threats Aid Hitler's Propaganda Exploded By Top Radio Analyst

Washington, D. C.—In a "message of sanity" addressed to the American people, AFL President William Green proclaimed the fact that American workers have silenced Hitler's propaganda guns and have shortened the war by record-breaking production.

This was his emphatic answer to a weird outburst of "smear labor" newspaper stories and radio comments instigated by alleged statements from a "high official source" at a secret press-radio conference.

The "high official source," later identified in the press as Gen. George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army, was quoted as saying that threats of a rail and steel strike would delay victory six months and cost hundreds of thousands of American lives. This hysterical charge was subsequently toned down by some of those present at the conference who quoted the "high official source" as saying that if Hitler were successful in capitalizing on strike threats in America for propaganda purposes it would stiffen resistance in satellite countries and might thereby delay victory and cost lives.

The validity of even the amended charge was exploded by William Shirer, noted propaganda analyst, in a broadcast over CBS. He said:

"The charge that the Nazis exploited our strike threats for propaganda is a little puzzling. Of 2,372 Nazi or Nazi-controlled broadcasts checked between Dec. 26 and Jan. 2, only 36 referred to the strike and of these only 4 were German broadcasts. Actually, the Nazis did try to make propaganda out of the statement which they attribute to Gen. Marshall. In this they were generously helped by the leaks which you always get at an anonymous press conference in Washington."

Thus it appears that the "high official source" rather than labor, played into Hitler's hands.

President Green said:

"We challenge Gen. Marshall or anyone else to prove that the record of America's soldiers of production provides an effective propaganda weapon for the enemy. On the contrary, the fact is that American workers have silenced Hitler's propaganda guns and have shortened the war by turning out tremendous quantities of planes, ships, tanks, guns and ammunition in record time."

Mr. Green emphasized that he was unwilling to believe that Gen. Marshall, because of his consistently fine record, could have been responsible for the "irrational, uninformed, and inflammatory charges published in the press."

He emphasized that the United Nations are primarily winning the war "because America has won the battle of production." He said he had received assurances from the War Department that the production picture was never better than at present and that war materials are proceeding to every fighting front in surplus quantities and with record speed."

"Let me assure the American people," Mr. Green added, "that so far as members of the American Federation of Labor are concerned there shall be no interruption of the march to victory in 1944. They have adhered faithfully to the no-strike pledge. They will continue to do so for the duration."

Discussing the issues in the rail and steel wage disputes, Mr. Green declared:

"I hereby charge that the responsibility for the prolongation of these disputes rests entirely upon bungling, fumbling and incompetent handling by government officials and agencies.

"I hereby assert unequivocally that, although a strike date had been set, there never was the faintest possibility of an actual walkout on the nation's railroads. The railroad unions, most of which are affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, are responsible organizations led by responsible and patriotic officials. Their record is among the finest in the nation. They gave their solemn assurance to the President and to Congress that, come what might, there would be no railroad strike. Setting of a strike date was merely a device, wholly in accordance with law, to expedite determination of a dispute which had dragged fifteen months and which had seriously upset the morale of the nation's railroad workers.

"The wage dispute of the nonoperating railroad workers could have been settled finally and amicably six months ago by labor and management on terms entirely in accord with the stabilization program had it not been for unwarranted and unnecessary interference on the part of the Economic Stabilization Director. The whole subsequent mess is the result of desperate efforts on the part of the government to save his face after a fearful blunder.

"It is not my province to comment on the steel wage dispute because it does not involve affiliates of the American Federation of Labor. But here again lack of a clear and cohesive policy on the part of the government precipitated the trouble."

The alarm felt in labor circles over the publication of anonymous smears against trade union cooperation in the war effort was echoed on Capitol Hill. Senator Robert M. LaFollette said:

"The unidentified spokesman reported by the newspapers over the week-end to have charged American labor with prolonging the war against Germany and adding to our casualties should have the courage and common decency to step forward voluntarily and identify himself. If the 'personage' who has chosen to make dastardly charges against labor which are tantamount to treason itself and who obviously seeks to spur the seeds of hate and disunity among Americans at this time when unity is so important does not come forward voluntarily and show himself, I think it would be well for some appropriate committee of the Senate to investigate, reveal the personage and force him to back up his charges or recant publicly."

Soon afterward a similar recommendation came from Representative Paul W. Shafer, of Michigan, who asserted that the anonymous declaration "should produce an inquiry by Congress to determine what motivated the statement."

Others who publicly deplored the anonymous charges included Senators Wheeler and Truman.

Army Likes "Union Label" Smokes

Washington, D. C.—I. M. Ornburn, Secretary-Treasurer, Union Label Department of the American Federation of Labor, is receiving numerous letters from officers of the Army and Navy Service Forces expressing their appreciation of the union label cigarettes that are being sent to our fighting men overseas by American labor unions.

A typical letter was received from Lt. Col. Richard S. Sollman, Special Service Supply Officer, Army Service Forces, New York Port of Embarkation, one of the points from which union label cigarettes are shipped to our fighting men overseas. He said:

"We hasten to acknowledge receipt of your contribution of concentrated contentment. We wish to express our sincere appreciation of your thoughtfulness. Relatively few of our civilian population realize that there appears to be no end point for American cigarettes among our soldiers serving on foreign soil. It is also reported that there is no cigarette substitute to be found in any foreign land for our good American brands.

"At the earliest possible date your material will be distributed to the happiness of our overseas soldiers will be placed in line for our shipment. The Special Service Officers overseas will be advised relative to your consignment prior to its arrival at their ports.

"Again may we express to you our sincere appreciation for your generosity and may we ask you to accept our thanks for the many soldiers who will be so fortunate as to participate in the reception and enjoyment of your excellent contribution to their happiness."

Mr. Ornburn revealed the volume of union-made smokes being sent each day continues at a high level and expressed the hope that our fighting men in the armed forces overseas would continue to receive them until they return home.